

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A tape drive apparatus comprising:

tape-oriented recording and/or reproducing means for recording and/or reproducing information to and/or from a magnetic tape housed in a tape cassette furnished as a recording medium, said tape cassette being loaded in the apparatus;

memory accessing means for accessing a memory which may be incorporated in said tape cassette furnished as said recording medium and which holds management information for write and/or read operations to and/or from said magnetic tape, said memory accessing means writing and/or reading information to and/or from said memory following the accessing;

information acquiring means for acquiring conditional information from said magnetic tape by causing said tape-oriented recording and/or reproducing means to reproduce from the tape said conditional information indicating whether it is mandatory to use said management information in said memory upon writing and/or reading information to and/or from said magnetic tape; and

operation controlling means which, based at least on consistency between specifics of the acquired conditional information and a result of suitable access to

said memory by said memory accessing means, controls a write and/or a read operation on said magnetic tape.

2. A tape drive apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said operation controlling means determines, as a result of said access to said memory, specifics of type identification information which is held in said memory and which indicates a type of the loaded recording medium.

3. A tape drive apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said operation controlling means determines, as a result of said access to said memory, whether said memory inside said tape cassette has said management information stored thereon in a valid format.

4. A recording and/or reproducing method for use with a tape drive apparatus, the method comprising the steps of:

recording and/or reproducing information to and/or from a magnetic tape housed in a tape cassette furnished as a recording medium, said tape cassette being loaded in the apparatus;

accessing a memory which may be included in said tape cassette furnished as said recording medium and which holds management information for write and/or read operations to and/or from said magnetic tape, said memory accessing step writing and/or reading information to

and/or from said memory following the accessing;

acquiring conditional information from said magnetic tape by causing said recording and/or reproducing step to reproduce from the tape said conditional information indicating whether it is mandatory to use said management information in said memory upon writing and/or reading information to and/or from said magnetic tape; and

based at least on consistency between specifics of the acquired conditional information and a result of suitable access to said memory in said memory accessing step, controlling a write and/or a read operation on said magnetic tape.

5. A recording medium furnished as a tape cassette equipped with a memory and housing a magnetic tape to and/or from which to write and/or read information;

wherein said magnetic tape has a predetermined area for accommodating conditional information indicating whether it is mandatory to use management information which is held in said memory and which serves to manage writing and/or reading of information to and/or from said magnetic tape upon said writing and/or said reading to and/or from said magnetic tape.